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Gabriele Diewald,
Elena Smirnova

EVIDENTIALITY IN GERMAN

LINGUISTIC REALIZATION AND REGULARITIES IN GRAMMATICALIZATION

TRENDS IN LINGUISTICS

Evidentiality in German

Linguistic Realization and Regularities in Grammaticalization

by

Gabriele Diewald
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Chapter 1
Introduction[1]

This book develops a model for the synchronic analysis of evidential markers in present-day German (henceforth: PDG). The study is backed up by a corpus-based investigation of the relevant diachronic developments, using data from Old High German to PDG. It focuses on the four evidential constructions *scheinen* 'seem', *drohen* 'threaten', *versprechen* 'promise' & *zu*-infinitive and *werden* 'become' & infinitive. Our leading hypothesis is that the development of evidential verbal constructions in German constitutes a grammaticalization process in the course of which evidential distinctions are integrated as grammatical distinctions into the verbal system of German. It is assumed that the category of verbal mood, which is realized by inflectional as well as periphrastic means, is closely related to, but distinct from, the newly developing evidential category. This leads us to the idea that with the rise of the four constructions under analysis to grammatical markers of evidentiality we are witnessing the genesis of a new grammatical category in the German language.

Our theoretical background and approach is based on grammaticalization theory, functional theories on language change, construction grammar, and typological research. The research is backed up by extensive empirical work with diachronic as well as modern German data.

This first chapter gives a survey of the basic assumptions guiding our endeavour and sketches our central questions and hypotheses. Furthermore, it provides a short review of earlier research on evidentiality and evidential markers and describes the corpora used in the empirical section and the methods applied in dealing with the data. As is inevitable in any overview, many details are omitted, arguments are abbreviated, and background information is heavily condensed. However, all the issues treated in this chapter will be clarified step by step in the following chapters.

1. A first approach to evidential meaning

1.1. Basic notions in the description of evidentials

Evidentiality is a semantic-functional domain having to do with the kinds of "proof" speakers are able to adduce in order to underpin their statements. Thus the study of evidentiality in language is concerned with the linguistic means languages provide for referring to "reasons", "indications", "evidence", or – in short – *sources of information* speakers have for expressing statements. As can be seen in the following definitions, the coding of an information source is considered the basic meaning of evidentiality, cf.:

> Evidentials may be generally defined as markers that indicate something about the source of the information in the proposition. (Bybee 1985: 184)

> Evidentials express the kinds of evidence a person has for making factual claims. (Anderson 1986: 273)

> Evidentiality proper is understood as stating the existence of a source of evidence for some information; this includes stating that there is some evidence, and also specifying what type of evidence there is. (Aikhenvald 2003: 1)

As Anderson (1986: 274) notes, evidentials encode the kind of justification for a factual claim which is available to the person making that claim. This justification may be derived from direct evidence plus observation, evidence plus inference, inference (where evidence remains unspecified), reasoned expectation from logic and other facts, and it may rely on different perceptual sources, e.g. on auditory, visual or other perceptions. For example, the German construction with the verb *scheinen* & *zu*-infinitive is a typical evidential expression which in many cases refers to direct visual evidence[2] for the proposition the speaker is asserting. This is illustrated in (1):

(1) *Sie scheint ihren Schirm im Büro gelassen zu haben.*
'She seems to have left her umbrella in the office'.

In this example the evidential construction refers to the fact that the speaker derives his/her conclusion from some (visual) evidence she/he has for making the claim (namely 'She has left her umbrella in the office'). The

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undeniable fact that this sentence also refers to the uncertainty of the speaker, implying that she/he does not have secure knowledge, is due to a particular trait of German evidentials, namely the fact that German evidentials very often have epistemic modality meanings as concomitant features. This calls for a thorough investigation of the relations between evidentiality and epistemic modality, which will be undertaken as we proceed (see Chapter 3).

Many other Indo-European (henceforth: IE) languages such as Russian, Spanish, French, Dutch or English are known to have evidential markers similar to the German constructions as the *scheinen*-construction illustrated above. Analogous versions of sentence (1) are given under (2) for Dutch (2a), English (2b) and Spanish (2c):

(2) a. *Ze schijnt haar paraplu in het bureau te hebben gelaten.*
b. *She seems to have left her umbrella in the office.*
c. *Parece haber dejado su paraguas en el despacho.*

Further IE languages with evidential markers are e.g. Albanian, Bulgarian, West Armenian and Persian (Lazard 1999, Friedman 2000, Johanson 2000, Giacalone Ramat and Topadze 2007).

As the expression of sources and types of knowledge belongs among the basic communicative or pragmatic necessities of any language, evidentiality must be seen as an indispensable semantic and functional domain in any language. Thus, although the possibility to express evidential judgments is not part of the grammatical system in all languages, i.e., it is not expressed by default and with grammatical means, speakers can always indicate the "reason" or "evidence" for their statements if they consider this neaessary for some reason.

The question to what degree an evidential construction is grammaticalized is one of the main issues of this book. It is therefore essential to provide clear definitions for grammaticalized items expressing evidentials values, in order to distinguish them from ad hoc lexical-semantic circumscriptions of evidential meanings. As this topic will be treated extensively in Chapter 4, some preliminary orientation should be sufficient here.

First, by way of terminological clarification it should be noted that only grammaticalized evidential expressions are called "evidentials" or "evidentials markers" here.

Second, it will be useful to resort to a non-formalized way of distinguishing evidentials from their lexical, non-grammaticalized predecessors

(cognates): this can be achieved with the help of a feature Anderson (1986) first drew attention to, namely that evidentials (i.e. grammaticalized forms) are always secondary predications operating on a primary predication, so that the secondary predication gives the evidential information which is the basis for making the primary predication.[3]

A third and last, the term "evidential" is reserved for linguistic expressions which – in the usage under question – have "the indication of evidence as [...] their primary meaning, not only as a pragmatic inference" (Anderson 1986: 274; see Chapter 2 for details).

Typological research has shown that a great number of non-IE languages have evidential markers which often form complex evidential systems of high degrees of grammaticalization. Among them are Tariana (an Arawak language spoken in the area of Vaupés, northwest Amazonia) and Wanka Quechua (cf. Aikenvald 2004, 2006), which are illustrated in the following tables.

Table 1. Evidential markers of Tariana (Aikhenvald 2004: 2f.)

Example Gloss Periphrasis			Evidential marker Periphrasis
Juse irida José football 'José has played football'	*di-manika* 3sgnf-play	*-ka* -REC.P.VIS	*-ka* 'we saw it'
Juse irida José football 'José has played football'	*di-manika* 3sgnf-play	*-mahka* -REC.P.NONVIS	*-mahka* 'we heard it'
Juse irida José football 'José has played football'	*di-manika* 3sgnf-play	*-nihka* -REC.P.INFER	*-nihka* 'we infer from visual evidence'
Juse irida José football 'José has played football'	*di-manika* 3sgnf-play	*-sika* -REC.P.PASSUM	*-sika* 'we infer this on the basis of what we already know'
Juse irida José football 'José has played football'	*di-manika* 3sgnf-play	*-pidaka* -REC.P.REP	*-pidaka* 'we were told'

Tariana provides a five-fold distinction of evidentials values (fused with tense), one of which has to be realized in every sentence.

As Aikhenvald (2006: 322) points out, Quechua languages distinguish three evidential values, namely "direct evidence", "conjectural" and "reported". Table 2 illustrates this three-fold distinction with data from Wanka Quechua as provided in Floyd 1999.

The examples show that evidential constructions are used for *the expression and modulation of types, degrees and sources of knowledge.* In

order to tackle this level of semantic differentiation in evidential distinctions it will be appropriate to say something about the methods applied for isolating and testing the specific meaning of evidential constructions.

Table 2. Evidential markers of Wanka Quechua (Aikhenvald 2006:322, data taken from Floyd 1999)

Example Gloss Periphrasis	Evidential marker Periphrasis
*trabaja-aña-**m*** work-PURPOSE.MOTION-now-DIRECT.EVIDENTIAL *li-ku-n* Go-REFLEXIVE-3p 'He's gone to work' (I saw him)	***-mi*** 'I saw it'
chay lika-a-nii that see-NOMINALISER-1p *juk-ta-**chra**-a* other-ACCUSATIVE-CONJECTURAL.EVIDENTIAL-TOPIC *lika-la* see-PAST 'The witness must have seen someone else' (her house was robbed; she saw someone next to her house, it was not me, I infer it was (*-chr*) someone else'	***-chi, -chr(a)*** 'I infer'
*Ancha-p-**shi*** Too.much-GENITIVE-REPORTED.EVIDENTIAL *wa'a-chi-nki* cry-CAUSATIVE-2p *wamla-a-ta* girl-1p-ACCUSATIVE 'You made my daughter cry too much' (they tell me)	***-shi*** 'they tell me'

According to Aikhenvald (2004: 3-4), the exact semantic description of individual evidential forms in general relies on a combination of various methods and procedures, among them native speakers' intuitions, substitution tests, semantic periphrasis, and what Aikhenvald calls "the possibility of lexical 'reinforcement'", which she specifies as follows:

> [...] an evidential can be, optionally, rephrased with a lexical item, or one can add a lexical explanation to an evidential. A visual evidential would then be rephrased as 'I saw it', [...] and a reported evidential with 'they told me'. (Aikhenvald 2004: 3-4)

Wierzbicka (1986, 1991, 1994, 1996) uses controlled periphrases with a defined vocabulary for circumscribing meaning. Together with her team she has developed a universal semantic metalanguage called "natural semantic metalanguage" (NSM) which consists of a small number of simple, defined and cross-linguistically tested concepts and a syntax for forming semantic paraphrases with these semantic primitives. A very brief exemplification will suffice here: in order to distinguish "sight evidentials" and "hearsay evidentials" in Maricopa Wierzbicka (1994: 103-104) suggests the following paraphrases:

(3) "sight evidential" *-(k)'yuu*:
I know this;
one could see it

(4) "hearsay evidential" *-'ish-'a*:
People say this;
I don't say: I know it

In this book we will not use this particular technique. Instead, we will apply the method of controlled, schematized periphrasis in addition to terminological labels. For example, the use of *scheinen* in its function as an evidential with a visual component like in (5), which today is *not* its central function (see below), is explicated by a periphrasis. A preliminary version of this is shown in (6) (P = proposition):

(5) *Sie scheint ihren Schirm im Büro gelassen zu haben.*
'She seems to have left her umbrella in the office'.

(6) The speaker has visual information for P.

As already mentioned in the discussion of example (1) above, the domain of evidentiality is closely linked to but distinct from (epistemic) modality, and the discussion on where to set the boundary between these two domains will take up some space in the following chapters. As a rule of thumb, one can say that while evidentiality indicates the source of evidence a speaker has for making a statement, without necessarily accompanying that with a factuality judgment, epistemic modality, is concerned exactly and exclusively with the latter, i.e. with the degree of factuality a speaker attributes to a proposition. The comparison between the two domains may be illustrated in the following minimal pair. While (7a) represents a set of epistemic modals, (7b) shows evidential constructions. The respective periphrases note the semantic distinctions of factuality judgments and evidential information. These distinctions will be refined and argued for in later chapters.

(7) a. *Die Lieferung* ***dürfte/könnte/mag*** *größer sein als erwartet.*
'The delivery should/might/may be larger than expected.'
The speaker attributes an uncertain factuality value to P.

b. *Die Lieferung* ***scheint/droht/verspricht*** *größer zu sein als erwartet.*
'The delivery seems/threatens/promises to be larger than expected.'
The speaker has evidence for P.

As will also become clear later, the notions of evidential and modal values intersect in languages like German; nevertheless it is essential to keep them theoretically apart.

Beyond its connection to epistemic modality, evidentiality is also closely related to the domains of aspectuality and temporality. Aspectuality comes into play where resultative and ingressive concepts are part of evidential meanings, temporality is touched when aspectual notions become semantically more abstract and thus acquire temporal meaning. These domains are involved in the diachronic development of evidential markers in German, where, e.g. in the case of *werden*, we find ingressive source constructions of the later evidential constructions in the early stages, which during their development also acquire temporal meaning. This will be treated in the relevant chapters in this book.

All these functional-semantic domains, i.e. modality, temporality, aspectuality, and evidentiality, have in common that they can be expressed in a variety of ways in a language: by free lexical expressions, by syntactic constructions or by grammatical markers in the narrow sense (i.e. as bound morphology or periphrastic, i.e. analytic constructions).

For example, temporality/temporal concepts in German may be realized by various kinds of linguistic expressions, e.g. by adverbials like *heute* 'today' or *später* 'later' (8a), by nouns like *Jahr* 'year' or *Stunde* 'hour' (8b), by subordinate temporal clauses introduced with temporal conjunctions like *als* 'when' or *bevor* 'before' (8c), and of course by grammatical categories, i.e. tense markers like the German preterite or perfect (8d).

(8) a. *Später/heute bekommen wir Besuch.*
'Later/today we will have visitors.'

b. *Der Harmonisierungsprozess dauert ein Jahr/eine Stunde.*
'The process of harmonization is going to take a year/an hour.'

c. *Als/bevor sie ging, betrat der Briefträger das gegenüberliegende Haus.*
'When/before she left the postman entered the house opposite.'

d. *Mitten in der Nacht ging er/ist er gegangen.*
'In the middle of the night, he left.'

Analogously, evidentiality and evidential distinctions may be expressed by a whole gamut of linguistic means. As far as German is concerned, we have the following options. First, we may indicate evidential meaning by evidential adverbials like *offensichtlich* 'obviously', *anscheinend* 'appar-

ently', *angeblich* 'allegedly' as in (9a) to (9c) or adjectives like *evident* 'evident' in matrix clauses, like in (9d):

(9) a. *Sie hat offensichtlich den Bus genommen.*
'Obviously, she has taken the bus.'
b. *Anscheinend hat sie den Bus genommen.*
'Apparently, she has taken the bus.'
c. *Angeblich hat sie den Bus genommen.*
'Allegedly, she has taken the bus.'
d. *Es ist evident, dass sie den Bus genommen hat.*
'It is obvious/evident she has taken the bus.'

Secondly, evidentiality may be expressed by syntactic constructions with semantically suitable verbs, including AcI-constructions with perception verbs like *sehen* 'see', *hören* 'hear', *fühlen* 'feel' (10a-c) or cognitive verbs like *schlussfolgern* 'reason', *schließen* 'conclude' etc. (10d,e):

(10) a. *Sie sah ihn durch den Garten davonlaufen.*
'She saw him run away through the garden.'
b. *Sie hörte ihn hinterm Haus singen.*
'She heard him sing behind the house.'
c. *Sie fühlte die Kälte in sich hochsteigen.*
'She felt the cold rising in her body.'
d. *Daraus schlussfolgerten sie, dass es keinen Sinn mehr habe, den Antrag zu stellen.*
'From this they concluded that it did not make sense any more to file the application.'
e. *Daraus schließe ich, dass es keinen Sinn hat, weiterzusuchen.*
'From this I conclude that it does not make sense to continue searching.'

Furthermore, German has verbal periphrastic forms with the verbs *scheinen*, *drohen* and *versprechen* with *zu*-infinitive and with *werden* & infinitive. They express strong evidential values – more particularly *inferential evidential* values (see Chapter 2) – insofar as they refer to reasons, indications, or evidence, i.e. to the source of information speakers have for expressing statements, cf. (11a) - (11d):

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